Condom use and exposure to PSI/SFH’s HIV prevention intervention among young women 16 to 24 with concurrent transactional partners in Trinidad

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BACKGROUND
Recent studies suggest that HIV infection rates among 15-19 year-old females in Trinidad are six (6) times those of males of the same age. (UNGASS, 2008) Concurrent, transactional relationships are believed to be an important driver of the epidemic. Although there is no accurate estimate of the number of concurrent partners, current data from St Lucia (similar sexual behaviours) show that females 16 to 24 years have an average of 10.6 sexual partners over 12 months (PSI, 2010). The data also indicates that males 45 to 49 years account for the majority of new HIV infections while a 2007 qualitative study in Trinidad reported that young girls prefer to have sexual relationships with older men. (Money Make the Nookie go ‘Round’-PSI, 2007).

DESCRIPTION
In 2008, PSI-Caribbean initiated a 12 month World Bank-funded HIV prevention program in Trinidad using peer education and mass media (television, radio & print) to promote condom use among young women with concurrent, transactional partners. The campaign positioned consistent condom use with outside partners as ‘the safer sex strategy that will protect your image, maintain status and be more beneficial than giving sex easily.’

A concurrent, transactional partner is defined as a male with whom the female had a sexual relationship while having another partner and from whom she received money or gifts. These are distinguished from casual and commercial relationships which are often comparatively short term and lack emotional attachments.

METHOD
• In February 2008, using a respondent driven sampling, a survey was conducted among 121 females 16 to 24 years old with concurrent, transactional sexual partners
• To participate in the study 16 to 24 year old females must have been sexually active within the past 30 days, had a regular partner and a concurrent (outside) partner
• Multivariate logistic regression was used to identify the most significant independent variables associated with condom use at last sex with a concurrent, transactional partner
• Analysis of variance was used to estimate the adjusted means/proportions of each explanatory variable by condom use

CONCLUSIONS
• Findings suggest that key determinants of condom use with transactional partners include condom availability and participation in hands-on activities. Looking at the levels of these indicators there is still room for improvement. In graph 2, results show that intention is another determinant of condom use but, reported levels not presented here are very high (95.0%) and as such will be difficult to increase programmatically in comparison to the other determinants.

• Future studies should examine individual, relational and structural barriers to condom use with regular partners and develop culturally appropriate strategies to promote condom use with all partners to further reduce HIV vulnerability among young women.